

# Business, Environment, Politicians and Water Leaders Back United Fight for Water Funding

*State of the Santa Ana Watershed Conference recognized  
for innovative approach to managing water resource*

Threatened by the state's water crisis hamstringing Southern California's economy, business leaders and water stakeholders formed an unlikely alliance to identify projects and set priorities for funding in advance of President Barack Obama's infrastructure initiative.

Nearly 1,000 business, environmental and water stakeholders gathered Thursday, January 29, to find united solutions to balancing population growth, economics, the environment and securing safe, reliable water during the inaugural *State of the Santa Ana River Watershed Conference* at the Ontario Convention Center.

"If we do not address our water challenges, the state of our economy now will be the state of our economy in perpetuity," said Allan Zaremberg, president and CEO of the California Chamber of Commerce.

The watershed is challenged by increasing demands and declining supply from the Colorado River and Bay Delta, as

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well as a need to capture rain-water to recharge groundwater and to increase desalination. While the challenges appear daunting, most of those attending agreed there needs to be clear communication between the business community, water agencies, state legislators and their constituents.

Recognizing the need and the difficulty of bringing a diverse group of stakeholders together, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors issued a proclamation praising the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority spearheading the effort and Riverside-based TMG Communications which produced the event as the region's creates a new water ethic for the 21st century – one of unprecedented cooperation.

"By working together, we can present a united voice in Sacramento and Washington D.C. as we find solutions to the watershed's challenges," said Riverside County Fifth District Supervisor Marion Ashley.

The conference focused on the Santa Ana River Watershed, a region home to one in six Californians which spans across four counties and 2,800 square miles. It is the fastest growing region in California with a population expected to reach 10 million by 2050. The watershed is also home to the 110 mile Santa Ana River Trail which runs from the San Bernardino

Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

"California has the appearance of drying up. That is hurting the state's ability to attract business," said Bill Carney, president and CEO of Inland Empire Economic Partnership. "We must improve communications between the water and business community so our state leaders understand the urgency of our water needs."

Bill Campbell, Orange County Third District Supervisor, emceed the sold out conference, which attracted more than six dozen sponsors and representatives from more than 130 municipalities, water districts, government agencies and environmental groups. A diverse group of more than two dozen experts discussed the issues facing residents, industries and the environment in the watershed.

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority General Manager Celeste Cantu' finished the conference by outlining a new approach to solving the watershed's challenges.

"We must be driven by aspiration rather than desperation," said Cantu. "We must move forward with a new water ethic for the 21st century—one where we value water differently."

Visit [www.santaanawatershed.com](http://www.santaanawatershed.com) for further information on the Conference (including video clips of some presentations), and information on upcoming events.



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## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Reuse & Desalination Research Conference

WaterReuse Association ♦ May 18-19

Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort, Huntington Beach

The 13th Annual Water Reuse & Desalination Research Conference will provide an opportunity for the water reuse and desalination community to hear and see presentations on the latest results of ongoing research. The conference provides a forum for water reuse and desalination research professionals to interact, network, and discuss current and future research needs and trends.

The focus of the Conference is on research that is likely to generate future scientific breakthroughs in water reuse and desalination. More than 25 presentations in the "single track" program provide a focused and unique opportunity for water reuse and desalination professionals to learn about new developments and trends emerging from current and ongoing research.

Further information, and registration, is available on the web at [www.watereuse.org/foundation/conferences/09Research](http://www.watereuse.org/foundation/conferences/09Research).